CLAIMS:

1. A cell-free immunoreactive Integrin Linked Kinase.

2. An immunoreactive Integrin Linked Kinase according to claim 1, wherein the kinase has a molecular weight of roughly 59 kDA as determined by SDS PAGE.

3. An immunoreactive Integrin Linked Kinase according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the kinase is detectable in mammalian serum by Western blotting with a polyclonal antibody raised against the kinase domain of ILK.

4. An immunoreactive Integrin Linked Kinase according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the kinase is detectable in mammalian (a) peritoneal fluid by Western blotting with immunoaffinity-purified polyclonal anti-ILK corresponding to the kinase domain of human ILK followed by peroxidase labelled secondary antibody, (b) tissue-conditioned medium by Western blotting using ILK antibody; or (c) serum or peritoneal fluid by immunoprecipitation on protein in 95% acetone:ethanol (1:1) with capture by antibody against ILK and immunoprecipitation visualised by Western blotting.

5. Use of the kinase according to any preceding claim as a biomarker for cancer.

6. A method of detection of cancer, comprising determining the presence or absence of irILK in a

sample of a biological fluid from a subject, wherein the presence of irILK is an indication of cancer.

7. A method of monitoring the efficacy of a treatment for cancer, comprising carrying out periodic tests, each test comprising determining the concentration or activity of irILK in a sample of a biological fluid from a subject, wherein a decrease in irILK concentration or activity between tests is indicative of the efficacy of any treatment.

8. A method for detecting recurrence of cancer, comprising determining the presence or absence of irILK in a sample of a biological fluid from a subject who has had cancer, wherein the presence of irILK indicates recurrence of cancer.

9. A method of assessing the severity of cancer, comprising quantitatively determining the amount or activity of irILK in a sample of a biological fluid from a subject, and correlating results with those previously determined for various grades or stages of cancer or correlating results with one or more other markers of cancer.

10. A method according to claim 9, wherein the other marker of cancer is CA125.

11. A kit for carrying out any one of the methods of claims 6 to 10, said kit comprising means for detecting irILK in biological fluid.

12. A kit according to claim 11, comprising an anti-ILK antibody.

13. Use of irILK according to any one of claims 1 to 5 or a kit according to claim 11 or claim 12 in the diagnosis of cancer or study of the efficacy of treatment of cancer.

14. Use of irILK according to any one of claims 1 to 5 in the manufacture of a medicament for use in the diagnosis and study of treatment of cancer.

15. A method of treatment of cancer comprising administering to a patient determined as suffering therefrom an agent capable of blocking the increased expression of ILK, or the effect of increased expression of ILK.

16. A method for prevention of the onset of cancer comprising administering to patients at risk of developing cancer an agent capable of blocking increased expression of ILK, or the effect of increased expression of ILK.

17. A method according to claim 15 or claim 16, wherein the agent capable of blocking the increased expression of ILK comprises an antisense nucleic acid for use in a gene therapy approach.

18. A method according to claim 15 or claim 16, wherein the agent capable of blocking the effect of increased expression of ILK comprises an anti-ILK antibody or an antagonist of ILK activity.

19. Use of an agent capable blocking the increased expression of ILK, or the effect of increased expression of ILK in the manufacture of a medicament for use in treating cancer.

20. A method according to any one of claims 6 to 10 wherein the sample of biological fluid comprises whole blood, plasma, serum or peritoneal fluid, ascites, or medium used to perfuse ovarian biopsies, termed tissue conditioned medium.

21. A method or use according to any one of claims 6 to 10 and 13 to 20, wherein the cancer is present in a mammal.

22. A method according to claim 21, wherein the mammal is a human.

23. A method according to any one of claims 6 to 10 and 13 to 22, wherein the cancer is one in which ILK expression is increased.

24. A method according to claim 23, wherein the cancer is selected from Ewing's sarcoma, primitive neuroectodermal tumor, medulloblastoma, neuroblastoma, prostate cancer and colon cancer.

25. A method according to claim 23, wherein the cancer is ovarian cancer.